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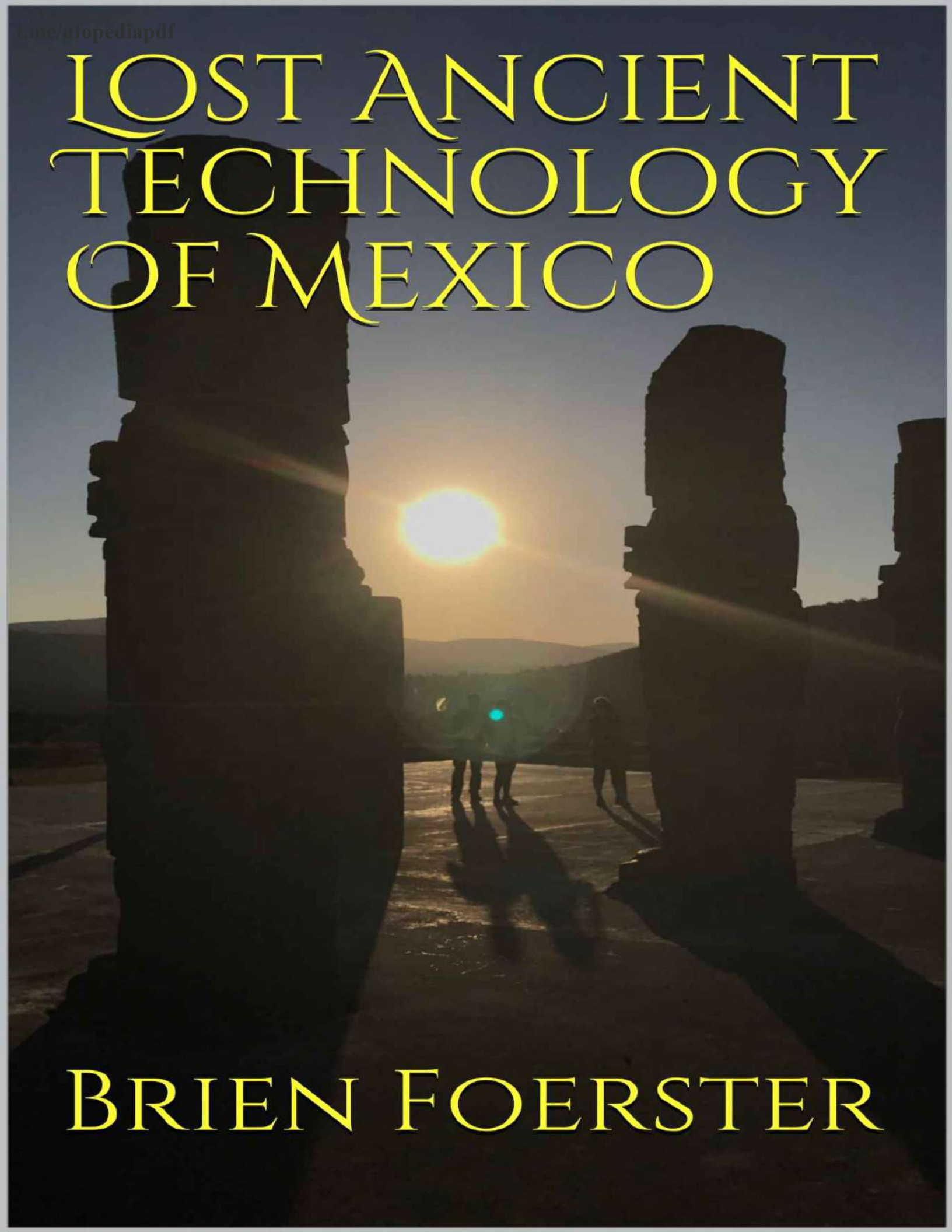
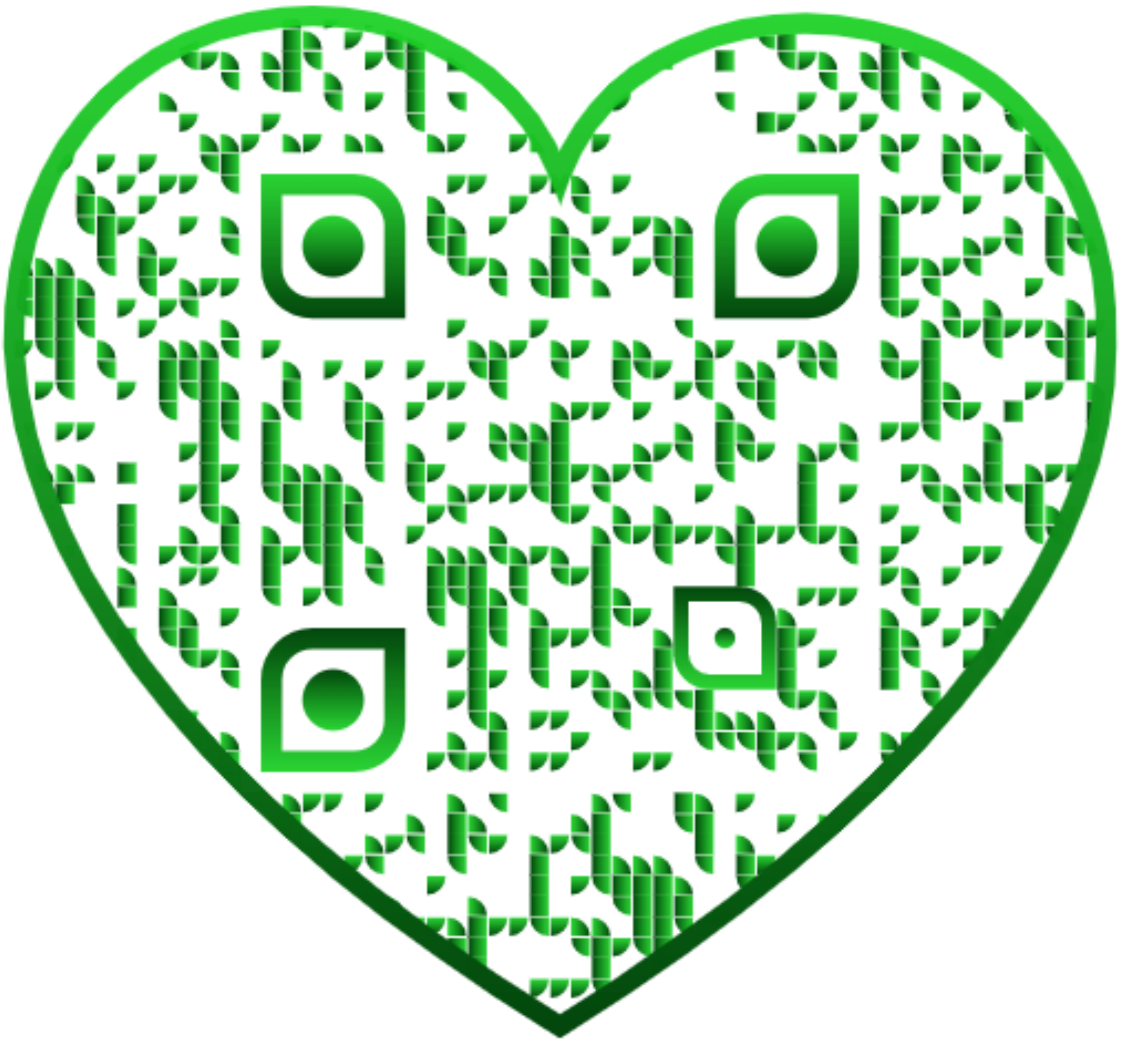
Lost Ancient Technology of Mexico



Brien Foerster



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Lost Ancient High Technology In Mexico

Brien Foerster

Cover Art By Hans Messerschmidt

When one thinks of pre-Colombian Mexico, the cultural names that usually spring to mind are the Aztec, Maya, Toltec, Mixtec, etc. All of these ancient people created complex societies prior to the arrival of European conquerors in the 16th century. However, their level of construction technology was largely limited to hand tools made of materials such as obsidian and other stones.

What if there were much older civilizations living in some of these locations that actually had advanced forms of technology that was lost, and that the Maya, Aztec etc. discovered ruins thousands of years later which they simply adopted, and then built on top of. That is the mission of this book.

My fascination with the Aztec, Maya and other Indigenous people began when I was in elementary school, and has continued on to this very day. Beginning with National geographic and related publications which our household received on a monthly basis spawned my interest, because these people and locations seemed very exotic to a child growing up in a largely European centric society in western Canada.

It was when I began traveling myself starting at the age of 16, and largely encouraged by my mother Ann, that I was able to see remnants of ancient people in many lands. As of the writing of this book I have visited more than 90 countries, and for the last 10 years my focus has been on evidence of lost ancient high technology as regards megalithic stone work starting in Peru and Bolivia, and later expanding into Easter Island, Egypt, Petra in Jordan, Baalbek in Lebanon, and other locations. It was on a trip to Mexico in January of 2016 that I saw large basalt slabs, quite finely finished in the jungle site of Palenque in Mexico, that I saw remnants that very likely could not have been done by the Maya people.

This book is part of a continuing series about quite clear evidence of lost ancient high technology, ignored or missed by standard academics existing in

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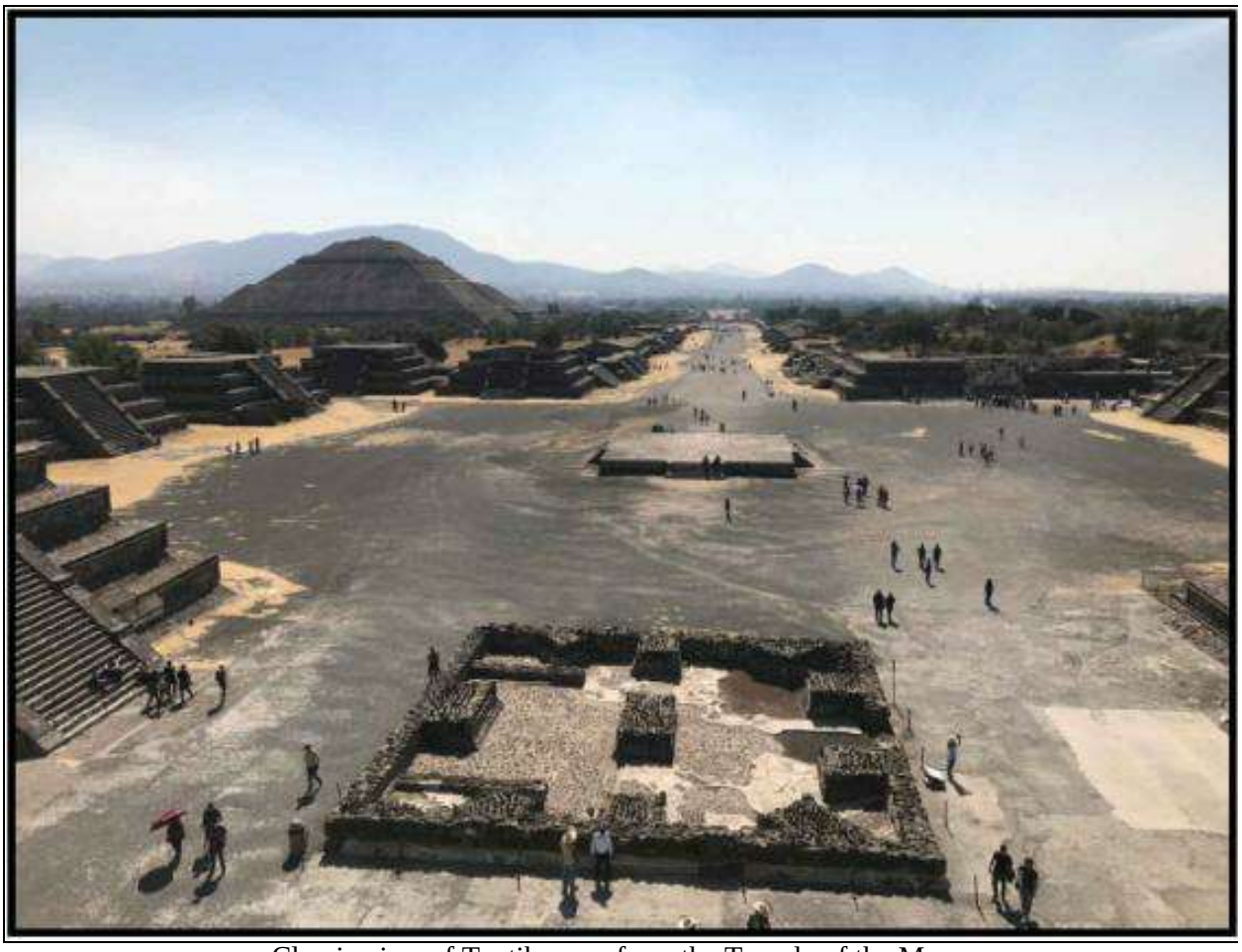
locations in many different parts of the world.

Teotihuacan



Classic view of Teotihuacan from the Temple of the Moon

The name *Teōtīhuacān* was given by the Nahuatl speaking Aztecs centuries after the fall of the city around 550 AD. The term has been glossed as "birthplace of the gods", or "place where gods were born", reflecting Nahua creation myths that were said to occur in Teotihuacan. Nahuatl scholar Thelma D. Sullivan interprets the name as "place of those who have the road of the gods." This is because the Aztecs believed that the gods created the universe at that site.

The original name of the city is unknown, but it appears in hieroglyphic texts from the Maya region as *puh*, or "Place of Reeds". This suggests that in the Maya civilization of the Classic period, Teotihuacan was understood as a

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Place of Reeds similar to other Postclassic Central Mexican settlements that took the name of *Tollan*, such as *Tula-Hidalgo* and *Cholula*.

The massive Pyramid of the Sun

This naming convention led to much confusion in the early 20th century, as scholars debated whether Teotihuacan or Tula-Hidalgo was the Tollan described by 16th-century chronicles. It now seems clear that *Tollan* may be understood as a generic Nahua term applied to any large settlement. In the Mesoamerican concept of urbanism, *Tollan* and other language equivalents serve as a metaphor, linking the bundles of reeds and rushes that formed part of the lacustrine environment of the Valley of Mexico and the large gathering of people in a city.

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Woman seated on a megalithic basalt block in the Temple of the Moon

The early history of Teotihuacan is quite mysterious, and the origin of its founders uncertain. Around 300 BC, people of the central and southeastern area of Mesoamerica began to gather into larger settlements. Teotihuacan was the largest urban center of Mesoamerica before the Aztecs, almost 1000 years prior to their epoch. The city was already in ruins by the time of the Aztecs. For many years, archaeologists believed it was built by the Toltec. This was based on colonial period texts, such as the Florentine Codex, which attributed the site to the Toltecs. However, the Nahuatl word "Toltec" generally means "craftsman of the highest level" and may not always refer to the Toltec civilization centered at Tula, Hidalgo. Since Toltec civilization flourished centuries after Teotihuacan, the people could not have been the city's founders. Could Toltec describe a vanished civilization of master builders that had advanced technological capabilities that was lost thousands of years ago?

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Basalt blocks at the Moon Pyramid that appear to have been recycled

In the Late Formative era, a number of urban centers arose in central Mexico. The most prominent of these appears to have been Cuicuilco, on the southern shore of Lake Texcoco. Scholars have speculated that the eruption of the Xitle volcano may have prompted a mass emigration out of the central valley and into the Teotihuacan valley. These settlers may have founded or accelerated the growth of Teotihuacan.

Other scholars have put forth the Totonac people as the founders of Teotihuacan. There is evidence that at least some of the people living in Teotihuacan immigrated from those areas influenced by the Teotihuacano civilization, including the Zapotec, Mixtec, and Maya peoples. The builders of Teotihuacan took advantage of the geography in the Basin of Mexico. From the swampy ground, they constructed raised beds, called chinampas, creating high agricultural productivity despite old methods of cultivation.

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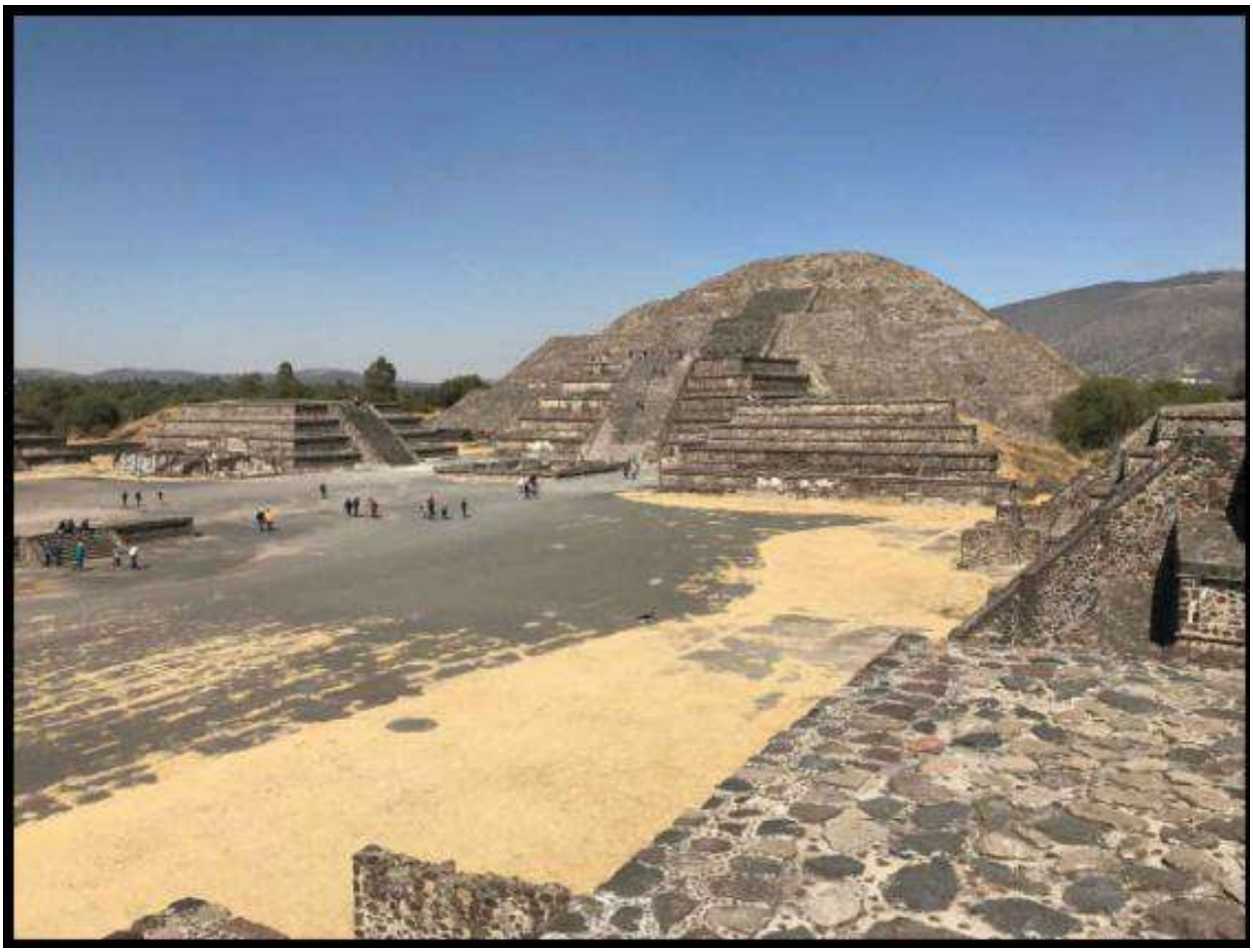
This allowed for the formation of channels, and subsequently canoe traffic, to transport food from farms around the city. The earliest buildings at Teotihuacan date to about 200 BC. The largest pyramid, the Pyramid of the Sun, was completed supposedly by AD 100.



Pyramid of the Moon as seen from a satellite pyramidal structure

The city reached its peak in 450 AD, when it was the center of a powerful culture whose influence extended through much of the Mesoamerican region. At its peak, the city covered over 30 km² (over 11 ½ square miles), and perhaps housed a population of 150,000 people, with one estimate reaching as high as 250,000. Various districts in the city housed people from across the Teotihuacano region of influence, which spread south as far as Guatemala. Notably absent from the city are fortifications and military structure.

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Finely hewn basalt blocks mixed in with volcanic rubble stones

The nature of political and cultural interactions between Teotihuacan and the centers of the Maya region (as well as elsewhere in Mesoamerica) has been a long-standing and significant area for debate. Substantial exchange and interaction occurred over the centuries from the Terminal Preclassic to the Mid-Classic period. "Teotihuacan-inspired ideologies" and motifs persisted at Maya centers into the Late Classic, long after Teotihuacan itself had declined.

However, scholars debate the extent and degree of Teotihuacano influence. Some believe that it had direct and militaristic dominance; others that adoption of "foreign" traits was part of a selective, conscious, and bi-directional cultural diffusion. New discoveries have suggested that Teotihuacan was not much different in its interactions with other centers from the later empires, such as the Toltec and Aztec. It is believed that Teotihuacan had a major influence on the Preclassic and Classic Maya, most likely by conquering several Maya centers and regions, including Tikal and

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the region of Peten, and influencing Maya culture.

Architectural styles prominent at Teotihuacan are found widely dispersed at a number of distant Mesoamerican sites, which some researchers have interpreted as evidence for Teotihuacan's far-reaching interactions and political or militaristic dominance. A style particularly associated with Teotihuacan is known as *talud-tablero*, in which an inwards-sloping external side of a structure (*talud*) is surmounted by a rectangular panel (*tablero*). Variants of the generic style are found in a number of Maya region sites, including Tikal, Kaminaljuyu, Copan, Becan, and Oxkintok, and particularly in the Petén Basin and the central Guatemalan highlands. The *talud-tablero* style pre-dates its earliest appearance at Teotihuacan in the Early Classic period; it appears to have originated in the Tlaxcala-Puebla region during the Preclassic. Analyses have traced the development into local variants of the *talud-tablero* style at sites such as Tikal, where its use precedes the 5th-century appearance of iconographic motifs shared with Teotihuacan. The *talud-tablero* style disseminated through Mesoamerica generally from the end of the Preclassic period, and not specifically, or solely, via Teotihuacano influence. It is unclear how or from where the style spread into the Maya region. During the zenith main structures of the site, including the pyramids, were painted in dark-red (maroon to Burgundy) colors (only small spots remain now) and were a very impressionable view.

The city was a center of industry, home to many potters, jewelers, and craftsmen. Teotihuacan is known for producing a great number of obsidian artifacts. No ancient Teotihuacano non-ideographic texts are known to exist (or known to have existed). Inscriptions from Maya cities show that Teotihuacan nobility traveled to, and perhaps conquered, local rulers as far away as Honduras. Maya inscriptions note an individual nicknamed by scholars as "Spearthrower Owl", apparently ruler of Teotihuacan, who reigned for over 60 years and installed his relatives as rulers of Tikal and Uaxactun in Guatemala.

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Finely cut and shaped basalt blocks at the Quetzalcoatl Temple

Scholars have based interpretations about the culture at Teotihuacan on archaeology, the murals that adorn the site (and others, like the Wagner Murals, found in private collections), and hieroglyphic inscriptions made by the Maya describing their encounters with Teotihuacano conquerors. The creation of murals, perhaps tens of thousands of murals, reached its height between 450 and 650. The artistry of the painters was unrivaled in Mesoamerica and has been compared with that of painters in Renaissance Florence, Italy.

Academics had thought that invaders attacked the city in the 7th or 8th century AD, sacking and burning it. More recent evidence, however, seems to indicate that the burning was limited to the structures and dwellings associated primarily with the ruling class. Some think this suggests that the burning was from an internal uprising. They say the invasion theory is flawed because early archaeological work on the city was focused exclusively on the

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palaces and temples, places used by the upper classes. Because all of these sites showed burning, archaeologists concluded that the whole city was burned. Instead, it is now known that the destruction was centered on major civic structures along the Avenue of the Dead. Some statues seem to have been destroyed methodically, with their fragments dispersed.

Evidence for population decline beginning around the 6th century lends some support to the internal unrest hypothesis. The decline of Teotihuacan has been correlated to lengthy droughts related to the climate changes of 535 to 536. This theory of ecological decline is supported by archaeological remains that show a rise in the percentage of juvenile skeletons with evidence of malnutrition during the 6th century. Which is why there is different evidence that helps indicate that famine is most likely one of the more possible reasons for the decline of Teotihuacan. The majority of their food came from agriculture, they grew things such as maize, bean, amaranth, green tomatoes, and pumpkin. But their harvest was not nearly sufficient to feed a population as big as it is believed lived in Teotihuacan. This finding does not conflict with either of the above theories, since both increased warfare and internal unrest can also be effects of a general period of drought and famine. Other nearby centers such as Cholula, Xochicalco, and Cacaxtla competed to fill the power void left by Teotihuacan's decline. They may have aligned themselves against Teotihuacan to reduce its influence and power. The art and architecture at these sites emulate Teotihuacan forms, but also demonstrate an eclectic mix of motifs and iconography from other parts of Mesoamerica, particularly the Maya region.

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Another basalt staircase that appears to have been repaired

The sudden destruction of Teotihuacan is not uncommon for Mesoamerican city-states of the Classic and Epi-Classic period. Many Maya states suffered similar fates in the coming centuries, a series of events often referred to as the Classic Maya collapse. Nearby in the Morelos valley, Xochicalco was sacked and burned in 900 and Tula met a similar fate around 1150. There is also a theory that the collapse of Teotihuacan was caused by its agriculture being devastated by the 535 AD eruption of the Ilopango volcano in El Salvador.

Knowledge of the huge ruins of Teotihuacan was never completely lost. After the fall of the city, various squatters lived on the site. During Aztec times, the city was a place of pilgrimage and identified with the myth of Tollan, the place where the sun was created. Today, Teotihuacan is one of the most noted archaeological attractions in Mexico.

In the late 17th century Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645 to 1700) made

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some excavations around the Pyramid of the Sun. Minor archaeological excavations were conducted in the 19th century. In 1905 Mexican archaeologist and government official, in the regime of Porfirio Díaz, Leopoldo Batres led a major project of excavation and restoration. The Pyramid of the Sun was restored to celebrate the centennial of the Mexican War of Independence in 1910. The site of Teotihuacan was the first to be expropriated for the national patrimony under the Law of Monuments (1897), giving jurisdiction under legislation for the Mexican state to take control. Some 250 plots were farmed on the site. Peasants who had been farming portions were ordered to leave and the Mexican government eventually paid some compensation to those individuals. A feeder train line was built to the site in 1908, which allowed the efficient hauling of material from the excavations and later to bring tourists to the site. In 1910, the International Congress of Americanists met in Mexico, coinciding with the centennial celebrations, and the distinguished delegates, such as its president Eduard Seler and vice president Franz Boas were taken to the newly finished excavations.

Further excavations at the *Ciudadela* were carried out in the 1920s, supervised by Manuel Gamio. Other sections of the site were excavated in the 1940s and 1950s. The first site-wide project of restoration and excavation was carried out by INAH from 1960 to 1965, supervised by Jorge Acosta. This undertaking had the goals of clearing the Avenue of the Dead, consolidating the structures facing it, and excavating the Palace of *Quetzalpapalotl* .

In late 2003 a tunnel beneath the Temple of the Feathered Serpent was accidentally discovered by Sergio Gómez Chávez and Julie Gazzola, archaeologists of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). After days of heavy rainstorm Gómez Chávez noticed that a nearly three-foot-wide sinkhole occurred near the foot of the temple pyramid.

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Large basalt blocks clearly not in their original positions

First trying to examine the hole with a flashlight from above Gómez could see only darkness, so tied with a line of heavy rope around his waist he was lowered by several colleagues, and descending into the murk he realized it was a perfectly cylindrical shaft. At the bottom he came to rest in apparently ancient construction; a manmade tunnel, blocked in both directions by immense stones. Gómez was aware that archaeologists had previously discovered a narrow tunnel underneath the Pyramid of the Sun, and supposed he was now observing a kind of similar mirror tunnel, leading to a subterranean chamber beneath Temple of the Feathered Serpent. He decided initially to elaborate a clear hypothesis and to obtain approval. Meanwhile, he erected a tent over the sinkhole to preserve it from the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit Teotihuacán. Researchers reported that the tunnel was believed to have been sealed in 200 AD.

Preliminary planning of the exploration and fundraising took more than six

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years. Before the start of excavations, beginning in the early months of 2004, Dr. Victor Manuel Velasco Herrera, from UNAM Institute of Geophysics, determined with the help of ground penetrating radar (GPR) and a team of some 20 archaeologists and workers the approximate length of the tunnel and the presence of internal chambers. They scanned the earth under the Ciudadela, returning every afternoon to upload the results to Gómez's computers. By 2005, the digital map was complete. The archaeologists explored the tunnel with a remote-controlled robot called Tlaloc II-TC, equipped with an infrared camera and a laser scanner that generates 3D visualization to perform three-dimensional register of the spaces beneath the temple. A small opening in the tunnel wall was made and the scanner captured the first images, 37 meters into the passage.

In 2009, the government granted Gómez permission to dig. By the end of 2009 archaeologists of the INAH located the entrance to the tunnel that leads to galleries under the pyramid, where rests of rulers of the ancient city might have been deposited. In August 2010 Gómez Chávez, now director of *Tlalocan Project: Underground Road*, announced that INAH's investigation of the tunnel, closed nearly 1,800 years ago by Teotihuacan dwellers, will proceed. The INAH team, consisted of about 30 persons supported with national and international advisors at the highest scientific levels, intended to enter the tunnel in September–October 2010. This excavation, the deepest made at the Pre-Hispanic site, was part of the commemorations of the 100th anniversary of archaeological excavations at Teotihuacan and its opening to the public.

It was mentioned that the underground passage runs under Feathered Serpent Temple, and the entrance is located a few meters away from the temple at the expected place, deliberately sealed with large boulders nearly 2,000 years ago. The hole that had appeared during the 2003 storms was not the actual entrance; a vertical shaft of almost 5 meters by side is the access to the tunnel. At 14 meters deep, the entrance leads to a nearly 100-meter long corridor that ends in a series of underground galleries in the rock. After archaeologists broke ground at the entrance of the tunnel, a staircase and ladders that would allow easy access to the subterranean site were installed. Works advanced slowly and with painstaking care; excavating was done manually, with spades. Nearly 1,000 tons of soil and debris were removed from the tunnel. There were large spiral seashells, cat bones, pottery, fragments of human skin. The rich array of objects unearthed included

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wooden masks covered with inlaid rock jade and quartz, elaborate necklaces, rings, greenstone crocodile teeth and human figurines, crystals shaped into eyes, beetle wings arranged in a box, sculptures of jaguars, and hundreds of metallized spheres. The mysterious globes lay in both the north and south chambers. Ranging from 40 to 130 millimeters, the balls have a core of clay and are covered with a yellow jarosite formed by the oxidation of pyrite. According to George Cowgill of Arizona State University, the spheres are a fascinating find: *"Pyrite was certainly used by the Teotihuacanos and other ancient Mesoamerican societies. Originally, the spheres would have shown brilliantly. They are indeed unique, but I have no idea what they mean."* All these artifacts were deposited deliberately and pointedly, as if in offering to appease the gods perhaps.

One of the most remarkable findings in the tunnel chambers was a miniature mountainous landscape, 17 meters underground, with tiny pools of liquid mercury representing lakes. The walls and ceiling of the tunnel were found to have been carefully impregnated with mineral powder composed of magnetite, pyrite (fool's gold), and hematite to provide a glittering brightness to the complex, and to create the effect of standing under the stars as a peculiar re-creation of the underworld. At the end of the passage, Gómez Chávez's team uncovered four greenstone jade) statues, wearing garments and beads; their open eyes would have shone with precious minerals. Two of the figurines were still in their original positions, leaning back and appearing to contemplate up at the axis where the three planes of the universe meet; likely the founding shamans of Teotihuacan, guiding pilgrims to the sanctuary, and carrying bundles of sacred objects used to perform rituals, including pendants and pyrite mirrors, which were perceived as portals to other realms.

After each new segment was cleared, the 3D scanner documented the progress. By 2015 nearly 75,000 fragments of artifacts have been discovered, studied, cataloged, analyzed and, when possible, restored.

As of January, 23 2018 the name "Teotihuacan" has come under scrutiny by experts, who now feel that the site's name may have been changed by Spanish colonizers in the 16th century. Archaeologist Veronica Ortega of the National Institute of Anthropology and History states that the city appears to have actually been named "Teohuacan", meaning "City of the Sun" rather than "City of the Gods", as the current name suggests.

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The evidence of a much older culture that may have had advanced technologies is relatively scant at Teotihuacan and mainly takes the form of the staircases shown in the above photos. Whereas much of the constructions, including those of the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon are composed of local rough volcanic stone and a type of concrete made from volcanic ash mixed with lime, the stairs are made of quite uniform blocks of basalt, from a more distant quarry and apparently shaped with powered saws of some kind.

Tula: Atlantean Warriors

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Dusk at Tula

The Tula site is important to the history of Mesoamerica, especially the central highlands of Mexico, but it is generally overshadowed by its predecessor Teotihuacan and one of its successors, Tenochtitlan, which is at

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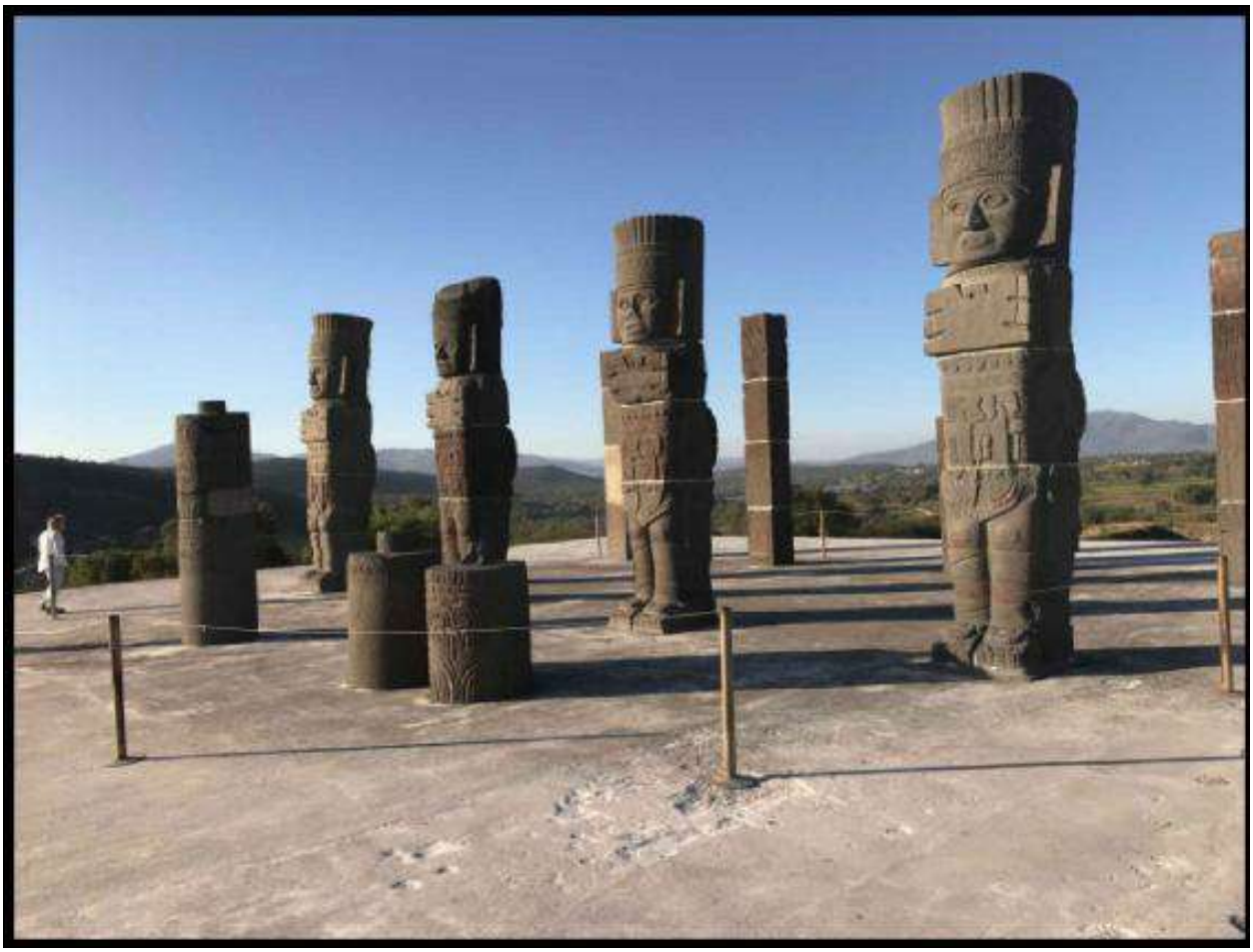
the heart of present day Mexico City. The name Tula is derived from the Nahuatl phrase Tollan Xicocotitlan, which means 'near the cattails'. However, the Aztecs applied the term Tollan to mean 'urban center', and it was also used to indicate other sites such as Teotihuacan, Cholula and Tenochtitlan. The inhabitants of Tula were called Toltecs, but that term was later broadened to mean an urban person, artisan or skilled worker. This was due to the high respect in which the indigenous peoples in the Valley of Mexico held the ancient civilization before the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire.



The so called Atlantean warriors of Tula

What remains of the ancient city is located in the southwest of what is now the state of Hidalgo, 75 km north of Mexico City. Geographically, it is in the Tula River Valley, at the south end of the Mesquite Valley in a region that indigenous records called Teotlapan (land of the gods). This area has an

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elevation of between 2000 and 2200 meters above sea level, with a semi-arid climate. It has only three continuously flowing rivers and streams, the largest of which is the Tula River. There are also a number of arroyos that flow during the rainy season.

The modern archeological site consists of the ceremonial center of Tula Grande, an area called Tula Chico, the Jorge R. Acosta site museum and the Guadalupe Mastache Orientation center. The museum is at the entrance to the site and is named after one of the archeologists who worked on the site for years. The interior is organized into various sections and contains sculpted stone works as well as human remains. The Orientation center also contains a number of archeological pieces as well as posters and more explaining the site's importance and relation to the rest of Mesoamerica.

The city is aligned at 17 degrees east of true north, similar to structures at Teotihuacan although the first village was aligned with true north between 700 to 900 AD. Why they were not aligned exactly to true north could be that the actual original construction was done thousands of years prior to what is generally believed when the axis of the earth was different.

The ceremonial center of the city is located on a limestone outcropping, with steep banks on three sides, making it defensible. War and sacrifice are prominent themes at the site with images representing warriors such as jaguars and coyotes as well as eagles eating human hearts. There are also images of serpents eating skeletal figures and skulls in various areas. The main structures of the ceremonial center include two pyramids, including with the atlas figures, two main Mesoamerican ball courts and several large buildings, one with a series of columns which faced a large plaza. The main ceremonial area has a number of architectural innovations that indicate societal changes.

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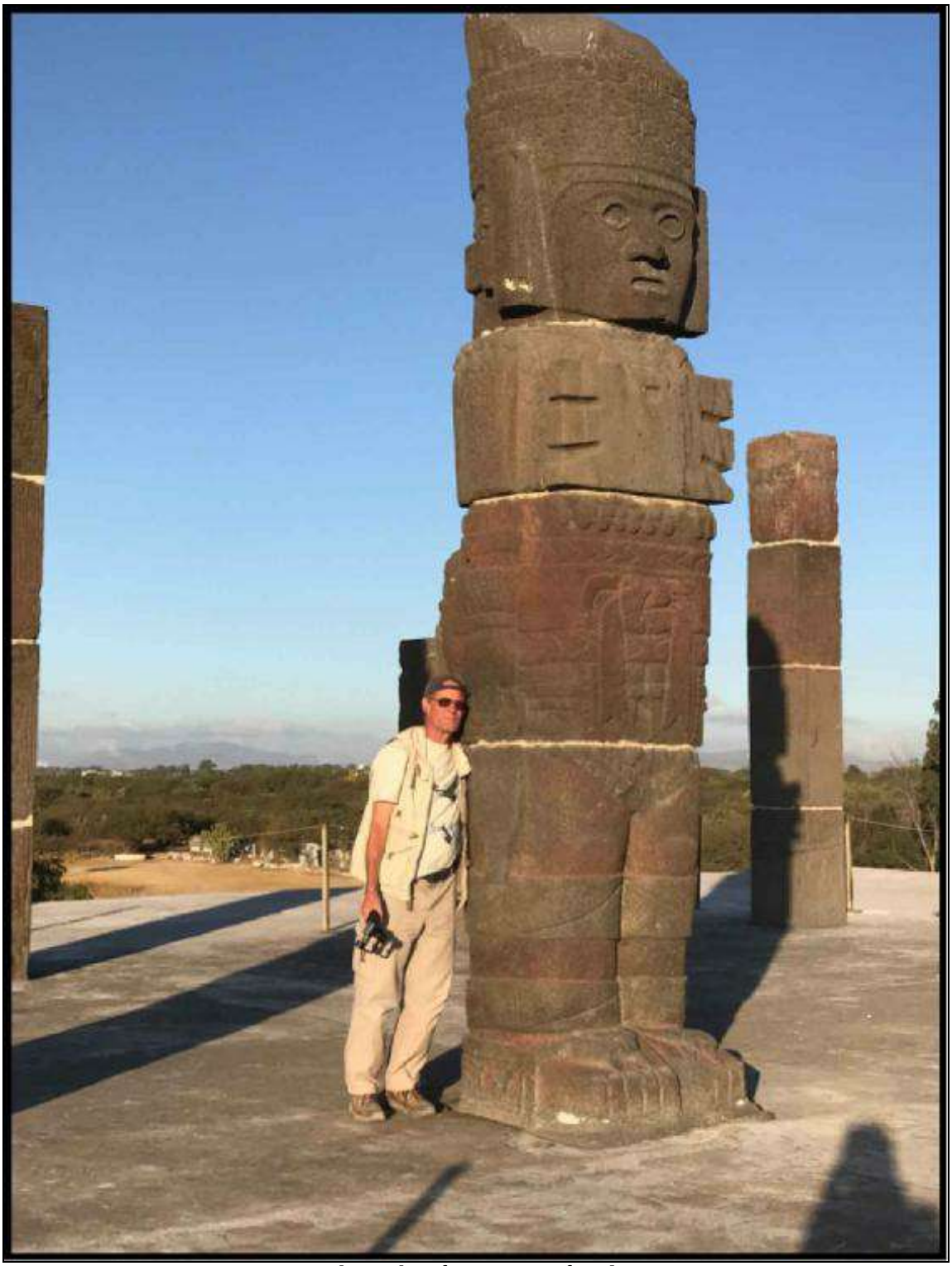

The author for a sense of scale

The large central plaza has space for 100,000 people. On three sides, there are long meeting halls with ceilings supported by columns all facing the plaza

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with over 1000 meters of benches, which have stone reliefs depicting warriors and others in procession. The architecture indicates a change from rituals performed by only a few people in closed spaces to large ceremonies to be viewed by many. These ceremonies were dominated by warriors.

Arrangement of the Tula warriors

The idea that the warrior figures were based on Atlanteans was an invention of a foreign author in the 18th or 19th centuries. The figures here are depicted as wearing "stylized butterfly breastplates, sun-shaped shields on their backs, feathered headdresses and carry spear throwers and a supply of spears". Serving as pillars for a wooden or thatched tent, the mason masses depicted warriors, loyal to the Feathered Serpent, Quetzalcoatl, a god-king associated with Venus. The temple earned its name 'House of the Morning Star' from this association. According to the local people the basalt stone used to create the warriors is not local, but the exact location of the quarry is unknown.

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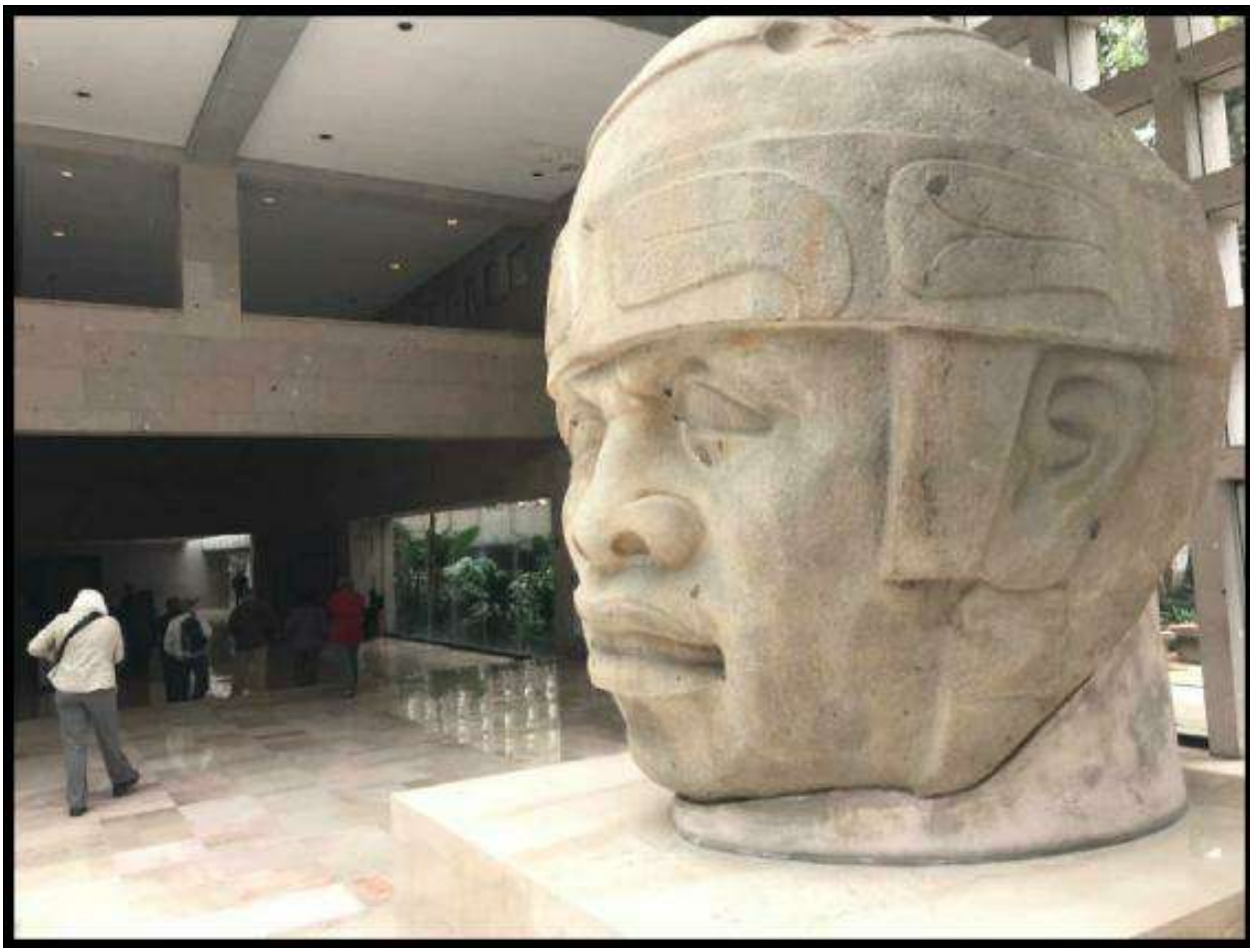
Out Of Place Artifacts
In The Mexico National And Xalapa Museums



Massive Olmec head in the Xalapa Museum

The National Museum of Anthropology (Spanish: *Museo Nacional de Antropología*, MNA) is a national museum of Mexico. It is the largest and most visited one in Mexico. Located in the area between Paseo de la Reforma and Mahatma Gandhi Street within Chapultepec Park in Mexico City, the museum contains significant archaeological and anthropological artifacts from Mexico's pre-Columbian heritage, such as the Stone of the Sun (or the Aztec calendar stone) and the Aztec Xochipilli statue.

Museo de Antropología de Xalapa (English: Xalapa Museum of Anthropology) is an anthropological museum in the city of Xalapa, in the

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state of Veracruz in eastern Mexico. The building was designed by the architect Edward Durrell Stone and opened in 1986. The museum houses the largest collection of artifacts from Mexican Gulf Coast cultures such as the Olmec, the Huastec and the Totonac with more than 25,000 pieces. The most notable pieces in the museum are the giant Olmec heads and the smaller Totonac ones, which are called "caritas sonrientes" (little smiling faces) in Spanish. The museum also contains a 40,000-square-meter garden.

Both of these museums are clearly the pride of the Mexican people, and properly honour the pre-Colombian civilizations. One thing that the two museums have in common are small objects, made out of obsidian, and presumably from the Olmec culture, that are absolutely astounding to the trained eye.

The Olmec were the earliest known major civilization in Mexico following a progressive development in Soconusco. They lived in the tropical lowlands of south-central Mexico, in the present-day states of Veracruz and Tabasco. It has been speculated that Olmec derive in part from neighboring Mokaya or Mixe–Zoque.

The population of the Olmecs flourished during Mesoamerica's formative period, dating roughly from as early as 1500 BC to about 400 BC. Pre-Olmec cultures had flourished in the area since about 2500 BC, but by 1600 to 1500 BC, early Olmec culture had emerged, centered on the San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán site near the coast in southeast Veracruz. They were the first Mesoamerican civilization, and laid many of the foundations for the civilizations that followed. Among other "firsts", the Olmec appeared to practice ritual bloodletting and played the Mesoamerican ballgame, hallmarks of nearly all subsequent Mesoamerican societies. The aspect of the Olmec most familiar now is their artwork, particularly the aptly named "colossal heads". The Olmec civilization was first defined through artifacts which collectors purchased on the pre-Columbian art market in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Olmec artworks are considered among ancient America's most striking.

Though relatively small in size, especially as compared to the enormous stone heads, earrings or ear plugs and other artifacts on display are of an amazing level of refinement, and very most likely could not have been made by the Olmec culture.

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Obsidian ear plugs in the Museum of Anthropology

The above artifacts are all of obsidian and are listed as having been created by the Olmec, who were largely a stone age culture, never having developed tools of bronze let alone iron or steel. These objects are perfectly circular, and though obsidian has a hardness of 5 to 5.5 on the Mohs scale where diamond is 10, it would require at least hardened steel or quartz tipped tools to shape this material so finely.

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The above obsidian vessel has clearly been machined

In the above photo the small dark vessel is perfectly bilaterally symmetrical and has an extreme high polish which could only be achieved on a very advanced powered lathe. The idea that the Olmec people had such technology is ridiculous.

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Several spindle shaped objects in the Xalapa Museum

The Xalapa Museum also has some interesting oddities that once again the academics insist were made by the Olmec such as the “spindles” seen above. Once again you can see that they are incredibly well made with a high level of polish and are perfectly circular. They could only have been made on a lathe of some kind, and I was fortunate to have engineer David Lewis with me to study them. He spent decades in the manufacturing industry and stated quite clearly that it would be impossible to create them by hand. It is likely that the Olmec found them, or traded for them, and decided to use them as jewelry.

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Side view of the spindle like objects

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Detail view of the spindle like objects

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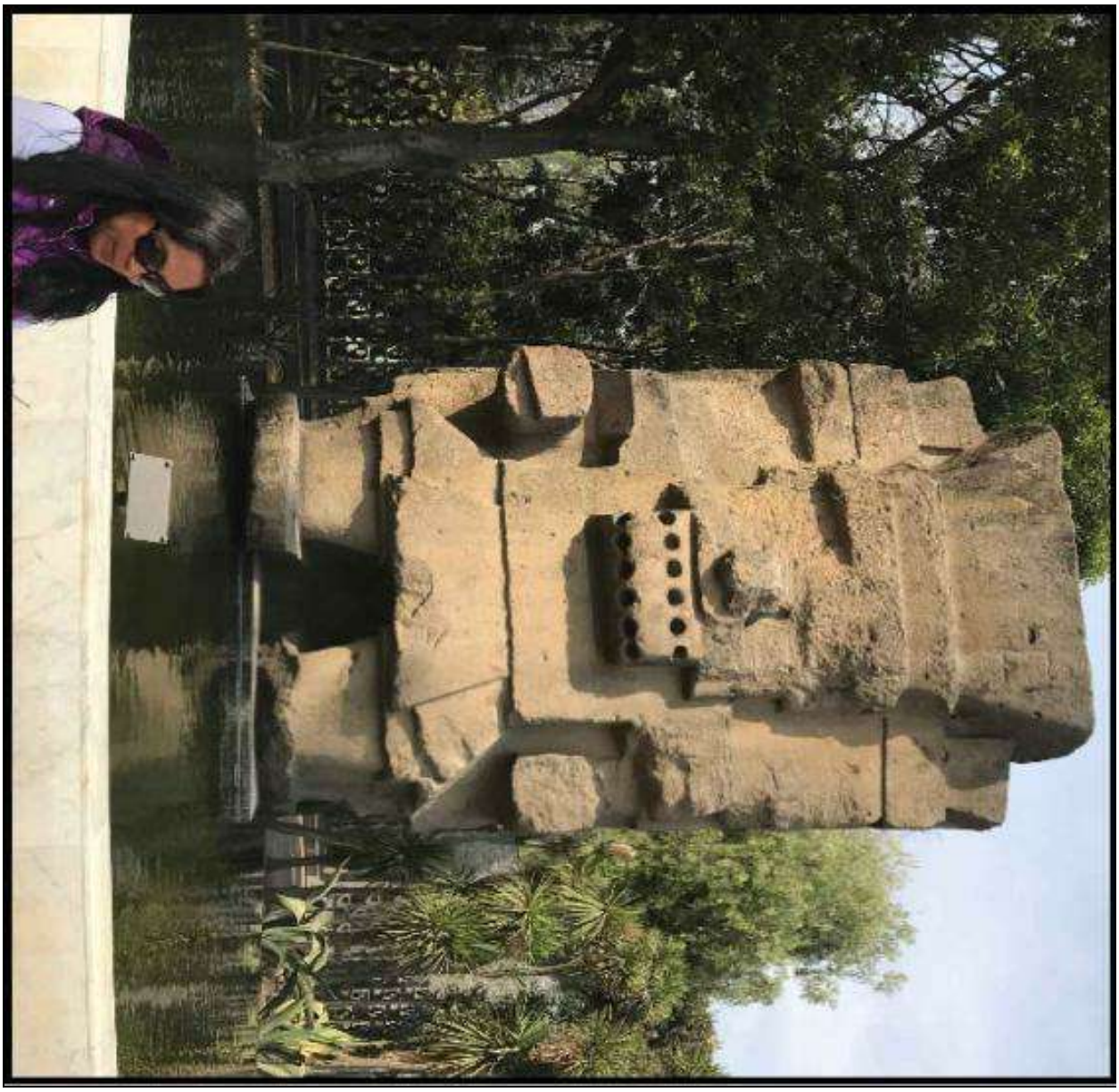

The immense basalt sculpture of Tlaloc in Mexico City

The Monolith of Tlaloc is a giant stone carving of the Aztec god of rain, water, lightning, and agriculture, Tlaloc. Once located near the town of Coatlinchan (which translates as ‘home of the snakes’) about 30 miles or 45 kilometers from Mexico City, it weighs about 150 tons. Today the Monolith of Tlaloc is located at the entrance of the National Museum of Anthropology in the capital of Mexico, Mexico City.

Tlaloc was one of the most important deities in the Aztec pantheon. The name of this deity is said to be a combination of two Nahuatl words, thali and oc, which mean ‘earth’ and ‘something on the surface’ respectively.

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According to Aztec belief, Tlaloc was a god primarily connected with meteorological phenomena that were related to water. One the one hand, Tlaloc could be a benevolent figure, as he would send rain, which was essential for agriculture as well as for human and animal life, to the earth. On the other hand, this deity could be a force of destruction, as he could also send storms or droughts to disrupt people's lives.

This huge work, which appears to have never been finished is said to perhaps be the largest ancient statue in all of the Americas would have been an enormous undertaking. It has somehow been dated to the 8th century AD, and is said to represent the Aztec god Tlaloc, but the Aztec did not exist at that time, and so who made it and how remains unclear. And what tools were used to quarry it, unless it was originally a massive single piece of stone that was found on the surface, which appears unlikely.

The examples given in this chapter are just a few of the artifacts that academics proudly claim they understand, but clearly don't. This is also the case in places such as Peru, where very complex megalithic works in hard stone are attributed to the bronze age Inca culture, or in Bolivia where the enigmatic ruins of Puma Punku are said to have been created by the bronze age Tiwanaku people. The most ridiculous claims are likely those made by Egyptologists, who still insist that such massive structures like the pyramids of Giza were the work of the dynastic, and yes bronze age Pharaohs.

Palenque

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Classic view of one of main structures at Palenque

Palenque also anciently known as Lakamha (literally: "Big Water"), was a Maya city state in southern Mexico that flourished in the 7th century AD. The Palenque ruins date from ca. 226 BC to ca. AD 799. After its decline, it was absorbed into the jungle of cedar, mahogany, and sapodilla trees, but has since been excavated and restored and is now a famous archaeological site attracting thousands of visitors. It is located near the Usumacinta River in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

Palenque is a medium-sized site, much smaller than such huge as Tikal, Chichen Itza, or Copán, but it contains some of the finest architecture, sculpture, roof comb and bas-relief carvings that the Mayas produced. Much of the history of Palenque has been reconstructed from reading the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the many monuments; historians now have a long sequence of the ruling dynasty of Palenque in the 5th century and extensive knowledge of the city-state's rivalry with other

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states such as Calakmul and Toniná. The most famous ruler of Palenque was K'inich Janaab Pakal, or Pacal the Great, whose tomb has been found and excavated in the Temple of the Inscriptions.

Large limestone blocks making up a staircase

By 2005, the discovered area covered up to 2.5 km² (1 sq. mi), but it is estimated that less than 10% of the total area of the city is explored, leaving more than a thousand structures still covered by jungle.

The famous structures that we know today probably represent a rebuilding effort in response to the attacks by the city of Calakmul and its client states in 599 and 611 AD. One of the main figures responsible for rebuilding Palenque and for a renaissance in the city's art and architecture is also one of the best-known Maya *Ajaw*, K'inich Janaab' Pakal (Pacal the Great), who ruled from 615 to 683. He is best known through his funerary monument, dubbed

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the Temple of Inscriptions after the lengthy text preserved in the temple's superstructure. At the time Alberto Ruz Lhuillier excavated Pakal's tomb it was the richest and best preserved of any scientifically excavated burial then known from the ancient Americas.

Standard Maya style staircase on the left made of rubble and mortar

The somewhat megalithic evidence at Palenque is subtle and easy to walk right past but is clearly present. The photo above shows a very simple and crude staircase, while the one in the upper photo was made using large and very well shaped blocks of limestone. It is quite probable that the Maya discovered the ruins of a somewhat destroyed earlier megalithic construction and decided to build their complex there using what ancient stones they could find.

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Very well shaped external blocks without mortar in front

The photo above is another example of this; in front you can see that the stones were very finely made and fit together without the use of mortar while in behind is much cruder work using rough stone and limestone mortar. The idea that this work was all done by the same culture in quite a narrow timeframe is highly unlikely, and another example of the Maya using what material they found on the location, or in the general area.

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Again refined work in front and rougher behind

The walls above tell as similar story to the location looked at above. On the right are the remains of a somewhat megalithic wall that shows major damage, perhaps from an ancient cataclysm while the wall behind, though perhaps repaired by archaeologists is made of smaller and rougher rocks with a lot of mortar. Why the wall in front was never repaired remains unknown, but perhaps the sizes of the stones was too much of a burden for them. No mortar was evident in the front wall which is much more of a challenge to construct than that on the left and again it is highly unlikely that the same culture evolved from the cruder style on the left to more refined on the right. The Maya had very limited access to even bronze tools so their having shaped the blocks on the right is very much in doubt.

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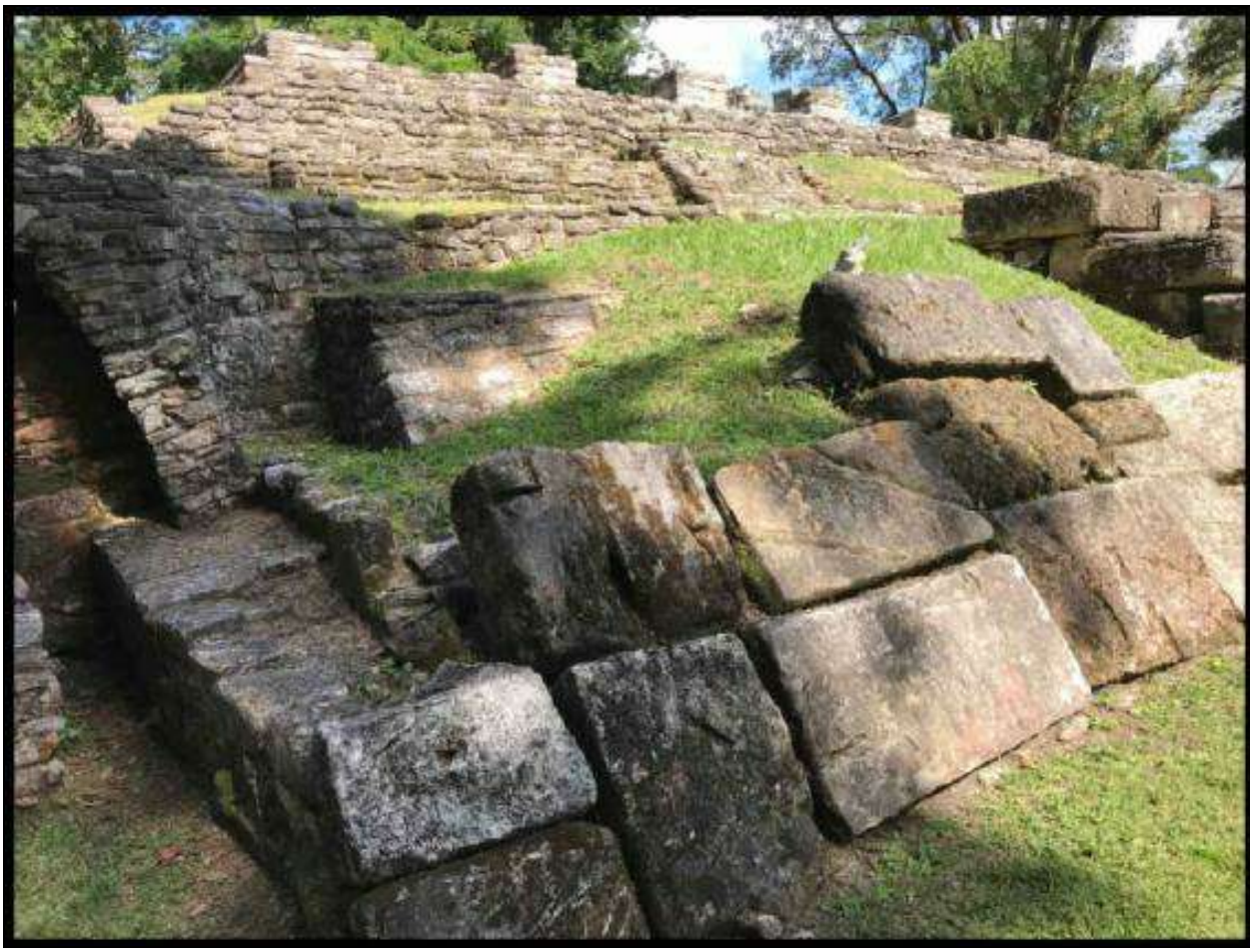

Again a strange contrast in building techniques

The photo above once again shows very large stones in front that look to be simply stacked together without mortar and a wall behind comprised of smaller stones cemented together. As only 10 percent of Palenque has been excavated there may be more evidence of megalithic work hiding in the jungle, but usually the oldest works using large stones tends to be in the core area.

Edzna:

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Relatively consistent construction techniques at Edzna

Edzná is a Maya archaeological site in the north of the Mexican state of Campeche. The site is open to visitors. The most remarkable building at the plaza is the main temple. Built on a platform 40 m high, it provides a wide overview of the surroundings. Another significant building located in the plaza is a ball court. Two parallel structures make up the ball court. The top rooms of the ball court were possibly used to store images of the gods associated with the events, along with items needed for the games.

Edzná was already inhabited in 400 BC, and it was abandoned c. 1500 AD. During the time of occupation, a government was set up whose power was legitimized by the relationship between governors and the deities. In the Late Classic period Edzná was part of the Calakmul polity. Edzná may have been inhabited as early as 600 BC but it took until 200 AD before it developed into a major city. The word Edzná comes from "House of the Itzaes". The architectural style of this site shows signs of the Puuc style, even though it is

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far from the Puuc Hills sites. The decline and eventual abandonment of Edzná still remains a mystery today.

Construction largely of rough stones and mortar

Edzná was discovered in 1907. The first organised excavations started in 1958. In 1986, coordinating agencies began to employ Guatemalan refugees in the excavation, restoration and maintenance at Edzná.

It is included in this book because it is an example of a Maya site that appears to have been constructed using one style of construction, and thus apparently has no megalithic aspects.

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Odd artifact at Edzna

The only real curiosity at Edzna is the construction seen above. The circular stones appear to be the remains of columns used in other works and then recycled into the platform.

Uxmal: “3 Times Built”

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Pyramid of the Magician at Uxmal

Uxmal is an ancient Maya city of the classical period in present-day Mexico. It is considered one of the most important archaeological sites of Maya culture, along with Palenque, Chichén, and Calakmul in Mexico, Caracol and Xunantunich in Belize, and Tikal in Guatemala. It is located in the Puuc region and is considered one of the Maya cities most representative of the region's dominant architectural style. It has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its significance.

It is located 62 km south of Mérida, capital of Yucatán state in Mexico. Its buildings are noted for their size and decoration. Ancient roads called *sacbes* connect the buildings, and also were built to other cities in the area such as Chichén Itzá in modern-day Mexico, Caracol and Xunantunich in modern-day Belize, and Tikal in modern-day Guatemala.

Its buildings are typical of the Puuc style, with smooth low walls that open on ornate friezes based on representations of typical Maya huts. These are

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represented by columns (representing the reeds used for the walls of the huts) and trapezoidal shapes (representing the thatched roofs). Entwined snakes and, in many cases two-headed snakes are used for masks of the rain god, *Chaac;* its big noses represent the rays of the storms. Feathered serpents with open fangs are shown leaving from the same human beings. Also seen in some cities are the influences of the Nahua, who followed the cult of *Quetzalcoatl* and *Tlaloc.* These were integrated with the original elements of the Puuc tradition.

Superior construction on the right and inferior on the left and above

The buildings take advantage of the terrain to gain height and acquire important volumes, including the Pyramid of the Magician, with five levels, and the Governor's Palace, which covers an area of more than 1,200 m^2 (12,917 sq. ft.). The present name seems to derive from *Oxmal*, meaning "three times built". This seems to refer to the site's antiquity and the times it had to rebuild. The etymology is disputed; another possibility is *Uchmal* which means "what is to come, the future." By

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tradition, this was supposed to be an "invisible city," built in one night by the magic of the dwarf king.

Superior construction on the main floor

While much work has been done at the popular tourist destination of Uxmal to consolidate and restore buildings, little in the way of serious archeological excavation and research has been done. The city's dates of occupation are unknown and the estimated population (about 15,000 people) is a rough guess. Most of the city's major construction took place while Uxmal was the capital of a Late Classic Maya state around 850-925 AD. After about 1000 AD, Toltec invaders took over, and most building ceased by 1100 AD.

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Quite uniform limestone blocks on the main level

What Uxmal is telling us quite simply that 2 civilizations existed there in pre-Hispanic times; one with some form of advanced technology capable of shaping the somewhat regular limestone blocks on the first level, and then a lesser skilled people, the Maya, building the second levels. The difference in construction techniques is quite startling and obvious. Who the earlier people were remains unknown, and most academics do not even realize or recognize the differences in the methods and approaches used.

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Wall that appears to have rebuilt by the Maya including shims

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Clearly this wall was rebuilt during Mayan times

Kabah

Large limestone lintels at Kabah

The name "Kabah" or "Kabaah" is usually taken to be archaic Maya language for "strong hand". This is a pre-Columbian name for the site, mentioned in Maya chronicles. An alternative name is Kabahaucan or "royal snake in the hand".

The area was inhabited by the mid 3rd century BC. Most of the architecture now visible was built between the 7th century and 11th centuries AD. A sculpted date on a doorjamb of one of the buildings gives the date 879, probably around the city's height. Another inscribed date is one of the latest carved in the Maya Classic style, in 987. Kabaah was abandoned or at least no new ceremonial architecture built for several centuries before the Spanish

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conquest of Yucatán.

Solid limestone columns at Kabah

The most famous structure at Kabah is the "Palace of the Masks", the façade decorated with hundreds of stone masks of the long-nosed rain god Chaac; it is also known as the *Codz Poop*, meaning "Rolled Matting", from the pattern of the stone mosaics. This massive repetition of a single set of elements is unusual in Maya art, and here is used to unique effect.

Masks of the rain god abound on other structures throughout the site. Copal incense has been discovered in some of the stone noses of the raingods. The emphasis placed on Chaac, the "Protector of the Harvest", both here and at other neighboring Puuc sites, stemmed from the scarcity of water in the region. There are no cenotes in this dryer, northern part of the Yucatán, so the Maya here had to depend solely on rain. The site also has a number of

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other palaces, low stone buildings, and step-pyramid temples. While most is in the Puuc Maya style, some show Chenes elements. The site had a number of sculpted panels, lintels, and doorjambs, most of which have been removed to museums elsewhere. The sculptures mostly depict the site's rulers and scenes of warfare.

Solid facing stones on a stairway

All in all, to a great degree Kabah is a Mayan construction with a few oddities such as the large lintels and solid columns seen above; not beyond the capability of the Maya but why there are such solid columns in one area and multi-section others in other locations is a little mysterious. Kabah is shown here to more or less show what the Maya were likely capable of, and the larger stones seen could simply have been the work of artisans that chose to give extra effort in their building areas.

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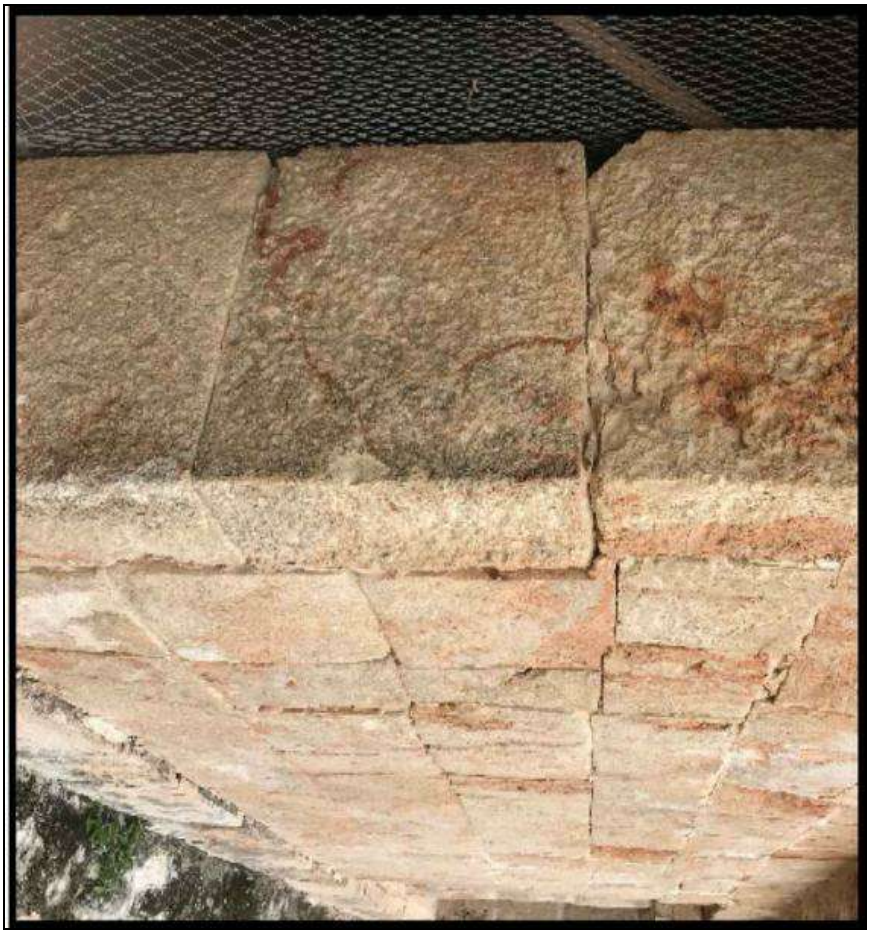

Wall section employing relatively large stones

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Stairs made up of small possibly column sections

Kabah and another Mayan site called Mayapan, which is close by are worth a visit if you happen to be in the Yucatan area, but not worth the effort if not. Few people visit these places, so if you want to explore sites that are quiet then these two are good. Next we will have a look at Chichen Itza, world famous of course but averaging at least 10,000 visitors a day due to its close proximity to Cancun, somewhat of a crowded nightmare.

Chichen Itza

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Large limestone block steps on a small temple

Chichen Itza was a major focal point in the Northern Maya Lowlands from the Late Classic (c. AD 600 to 900 AD) through the Terminal Classic (800 to 900) and into the early portion of the Postclassic period (c. AD 900 to 1200.) The site exhibits a multitude of architectural styles, reminiscent of styles seen in central Mexico and of the Puuc and Chenes styles of the Northern Maya lowlands. The presence of central Mexican styles was once thought to have been representative of direct migration or even conquest from central Mexico, but most contemporary interpretations view the presence of these non-Maya styles more as the result of cultural diffusion.

Chichen Itza was one of the largest Maya cities and it was likely to have been one of the mythical great cities, or *Tollans*, referred to in later Mesoamerican literature. The city may have had the most diverse population in the Maya world, a factor that could have contributed to the variety of architectural styles at the site.

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Relatively large limestone slabs in the wall

The Maya name "Chichen Itza" means "At the mouth of the well of the Itza." This derives from *chi'*, meaning "mouth" or "edge," and *ch'en* or *ch'e'en*, meaning "well." *Itzá* is the name of an ethnic-lineage group that gained political and economic dominance of the northern peninsula. One possible translation for Itza is "enchanter (or enchantment) of the water,"[5] from *its*, "sorcerer," and *ha*, "water."

According to some colonial Mayan sources (e.g., the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel), Hunac Ceel, ruler of Mayapan, conquered Chichen Itza in the 13th century. Hunac Ceel supposedly prophesied his own rise to power. According to custom at the time, individuals thrown into the Cenote Sagrado were believed to have the power of prophecy if they survived. During one such ceremony, the chronicles state, there were no survivors, so Hunac Ceel leaped into the Cenote Sagrado, and when removed, prophesied his own

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ascension.

Uniform stones in walls near the Ball Court

While there is some archaeological evidence that indicates Chichén Itzá was at one time looted and sacked, there appears to be greater evidence that it could not have been by Mayapan, at least not when Chichén Itzá was an active urban center. Archaeological data now indicates that Chichen Itza declined as a regional center by 1250, before the rise of Mayapan.

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Walls and stairs of the famous El Castillo

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Sectioned columns at Chichen Itza

Lower course of large stones and rubble above

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Chichen Itza is a very crowded place and it was difficult to take photos without throngs of visitors being literally in your face. Also, there are few signs of any major blocks of stone being employed except in the photos above. Rather than the grand works such as the El Castillo pyramidal structure which is the only thing most tourists photograph themselves in front of showing precision work, it was two very small temples with oversized steps made of solid blocks that were of interest. The photo above shows that though most of the steps were made of limestone rubble with originally perhaps larger casing stones on top the lower 2 courses are much larger stones. It could very well be that the Maya found Chichen Itza in ruins and that there were 3 small temples or maybe more in the core that had steps made of solid blocks of limestone.

Solid blocks on the small temple on the left

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The author inspecting the large block steps

Mitla: Incredible Surprise

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6 ton basalt block at Mitla; one of many

Mitla is the second most important archeological site in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico, and the most important of the Zapotec culture. The site is located 44 km from the city of Oaxaca in the upper end of the Tlacolula Valley, one of the three that form the Central Valleys Region of the state. While Monte Albán was most important as the political center, Mitla was the main religious center. The name Mitla is derived from the Nahuatl name Mictlán, which was the place of the dead or underworld. Its Zapotec name is *Lyobaa*, which means “place of rest.” The name Mictlán was Hispanicized to Mitla by the Spanish.

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Large basalt blocks incorporated into a local church

However, what makes Mitla unique among Mesoamerican sites is the elaborate and intricate mosaic fretwork and geometric designs that cover tombs, panels, friezes and even entire walls. These mosaics are made with small, finely cut and polished stone pieces which have been fitted together without the use of mortar. No other site in Mexico has this.

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Massive basalt lintels at Mitla

Mitla is one of many well-preserved archeological sites of the Oaxaca Valley, where the dry climate has conserved sites as old as 10,000 years. This valley was settled by the Zapotecs who over the centuries developed a hierarchical society governed by kings and nobles. While the valley was relatively isolated, the Zapotecs did have contacts with other Mesoamerican peoples. By the time the Spanish arrived, the Zapotec state had a population of over 500,000, sophisticated construction techniques, a writing system, two calendar systems and agriculture that included the growing of maize, beans, squash, and chili peppers, using irrigation and terraces in the mountains to grow food for a mostly urban population.

Mitla itself was inhabited at least since the Classic Period (100 to 650 AD) and perhaps from as early as 900 BC. It began as a fortified village on the outer edge of the valley and later became the main religious center for the area. The Mixtecs took control of the area around 1000 AD, although the area

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remained populated by the Zapotec. The city reached its height and largest size between 750 and 1521, with both Zapotec and Mixtec influences in its architecture during that time. Mitla is one of the pre-Columbian sites that represent the Mesoamerican belief that death was the most consequential part of life after birth. It was built as a gateway between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

The photos above show that Mitla has some amazing megalithic aspects that academics are either blind to or choose to ignore. Local knowledge experts informed us that the quarry, which you can see from the Mitla site is about 1 mile away. The Zapotecs and Mixtecs as far as I know did not have even bronze tools, so they clearly inherited a megalithic site, which, like others in Mexico had to have been created using advanced technologies in the very distant past. We visited Mitla on our last day in Mexico and I was in complete shock at the massive stones we saw; some in place such as the 6 ton lintels of which there are at least 10; the 10 ton slab you will see in a following photo, or the even more massive 16 to 20 ton beam that unfortunately I did not get a good photo of.

Though not as impressive in terms of scale as megalithic sites in Peru or Egypt, Mexico does, as this book shows have a mysterious ancient past largely neglected or not seen by scholars. Some of the Native people have the knowledge, and through future yearly tours we hope to learn more from them to share with you.

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Local church with large blocks recycled from Mitla

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What else does ancient Mexico have to share with us?